Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

2000–24–18 Airbus Industrie: Amendment 39–12025. Docket 2000–NM–96–AD.

Applicability: Model A300 B2 and B4 series airplanes, and Model A300 B4–600, A300 B4–600R, and A300 F4–600R (A300–600) series airplanes; certificated in any category; except those airplanes on which Airbus Modification 04489 has been installed during production.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been otherwise modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For airplanes that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (b) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and, if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent chafing of the wire harnesses of the high-level sensors, which could result in a short circuit and consequent fuel ignition source inside the outer wing fuel tanks, accomplish the following:

Detailed Visual Inspection

(a) Within 500 flight hours after the effective date of this AD, perform a detailed visual inspection to detect chafing and the existence of repairs of the harness (cable) of the high-level sensor of the fuel surge tanks, and to detect chafe marks on the support canisters of the magnetic level indicators, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–28–0077 (for Model A300 series airplanes) or A300–28–6062 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes), each dated July 19, 1999, as applicable.

(1) For airplanes on which modification of the harness in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–28–0058 (for Model A300 series airplanes) or A300–28–6020 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes), as applicable, HAS NOT been accomplished: Accomplish the requirements of paragraphs (a)(1)(i) and (a)(1)(ii) of this AD.

(i) Repeat the detailed visual inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 500 flight hours until the requirements of paragraph (a)(1)(ii) of this AD are accomplished. If any wire chafing, chafe mark, or existing repair is detected during any inspection, prior to further flight, determine the appropriate repair and/or condition of repair as specified in Inspection Table 1 of the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A300–28–0077 or A300–28–6062, as applicable. At the times specified in Inspection Table I, accomplish corrective actions (e.g., temporary or permanent repairs, and follow-on inspections and repairs) in accordance with the applicable service bulletin. If any discrepancy is found during any follow-on inspection, prior to further flight, repair the discrepancy in accordance with the applicable service bulletin.

(ii) Within 18 months after the effective date of this AD, modify the harness of the high-level sensor in the outer wing fuel tanks in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–28–0058, Revision 02 (for Model A300 series airplanes), or A300–28–6020, Revision 01 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes), each dated September 28, 1999. Accomplishment of the modification terminates the 500-flight-hour repetitive inspection required by paragraph (a)(1) of this AD. However, if a temporary repair is installed, the 10,000-flight-hour detailed visual inspection specified in the follow-on corrective actions of Table 1 continues to be required by this AD.

(2) For airplanes on which modification of the harness in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–28–0058 (for Model A300 series airplanes) or A300–28–6020 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes), as applicable, HAS been accomplished: Accomplish the requirements of paragraph (a)(2)(i) or (a)(2)(ii), as applicable.

(i) If no wire chafing, chafe marks, or existing repairs are detected, no further action is required by this AD.

(ii) If any wire chafing, chafe mark, or existing repair is detected, prior to further flight, determine the appropriate repair and/or condition of repair specified in Inspection Table 2 of the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A300–28–0077 or A300–28–6062, as applicable. At the times specified in Inspection Table 2, accomplish corrective actions (e.g., temporary or permanent repairs and follow-on inspections) in accordance with the applicable service bulletin. If any discrepancy is found during any follow-on inspection, prior to further flight, repair the discrepancy in accordance with the applicable service bulletin.

Note 2: For the purposes of this AD, a detailed visual inspection is defined as: ''An intensive visual examination of a specific structural area, system, installation, or assembly to detect damage, failure, or irregularity. Available lighting is normally supplemented with a direct source of good lighting at intensity deemed appropriate by the inspector. Inspection aids such as mirrors, magnifying lenses, etc., may be used. Surface cleaning and elaborate access procedures may be required.''

Note 3: Modification accomplished prior to the effective date of this AD in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–28–0058, dated December 15, 1988, or Revision 01, dated October 1, 1991 (for Model A300 series airplanes); or A300–28–6020, dated December 15, 1988 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes); is considered acceptable for compliance with the action specified in paragraph (a)(1)(ii) of this AD.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(b) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116.

Note 4: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the International Branch, ANM–116.

Special Flight Permits

(c) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Incorporation by Reference

(d) The actions shall be done in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–28–0077, dated July 19, 1999; Airbus Service Bulletin A300–28–0058, Revision 02, dated September 28, 1999; Airbus Service Bulletin A300–28–6062, dated July 19, 1999; or Airbus Service Bulletin A300–28–6020, Revision 01, dated September 28, 1999; as applicable. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

Note 5: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 1999–404–293(B), dated October 6, 1999.

Effective Date

(e) This amendment becomes effective on January 8, 2001.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on November 22, 2000.

Donald L. Riggin,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 00–30395 Filed 12–1–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2000–NM–227–AD; Amendment 39–12015; AD 2000–24–08]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A319, A320, and A321 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to all Airbus Model A319, A320, and A321 series airplanes, that requires a revision to the Airplane Flight Manual; inspection to detect damage of the wiring and adjacent structure along the length of the fairing of the fuel boost pump; corrective actions, if necessary; and modification of the fuel pump wire and fairing. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent electrical arcing of the fuel boost pump wire, which could result in wing structural damage, fire, and/or fuel vapor explosion. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Effective January 8, 2001.

ADDRESSES: The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. This information may be examined at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tim Dulin, Aerospace Engineer, ANM–116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (425) 227–2141; fax (425) 227–1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to include an airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to all Airbus Model A319, A320, and A321 series airplanes was published in the **Federal Register** on August 24, 2000 (65 FR 51560). That action proposed to require a revision to the Airplane Flight Manual (AFM); inspection to detect damage of the wiring and adjacent structure along the length of the fairing of the fuel boost pump; corrective actions, if necessary; and modification of the fuel pump wire and fairing.

Action Since the Issuance of Proposed AD

The Direction Generale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, has issued French airworthiness directive 2000–419–154(B), dated October 4, 2000. That airworthiness directive includes a procedure for revising the AFM. In addition, if a fuel boost pump malfunctions, airworthiness directive procedures specify removing the wiring fairing to inspect the electrical wiring, fairing, and wing skin within the fairing area; and corrective actions, if necessary. Procedures also include a reporting requirement.

Comments

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. Due consideration has been given to the comments received.

One commenter supports the AFM revision specified by the proposed AD.

Request To Delete the Inspection Requirement

Five commenters request deleting the requirement in paragraph (b) of the proposed AD, which specifies an inspection of the wiring and adjacent structure along the length of the fairing. All of the commenters are concerned that the inspection could induce more damage, even if operators exercise caution as recommended in the proposed AD.

One commenter states that in-service experience indicates that arcing of the underwing fuel pump wiring is mainly linked to poor maintenance action rather than to damage due to vibration and chafing. That commenter considers that most of the damage has occurred during fairing replacement when the fuel boost pump wire can be pinched and damaged. A second commenter concurs and suggests that the inspection specified in paragraph (b) be included in paragraph (c) of this AD, in case a circuit breaker tripped. A third commenter considers that removing the fairing is unnecessary, and that such action may cause needless damage to the wiring upon re-installation. In addition, the design of the system is such that, if a wire is trapped, the circuit breaker will trip and avert danger. A fourth commenter considers that the inspection increases the probability of inducing a fault despite heightened awareness, and that the inspection should be required only when terminating action is identified and applied before reinstalling the fairing. A fifth commenter notes that, if a fuel pump circuit breaker trips, a full inspection of the wiring underneath the fairing is required prior to further use of that pump. Further, that requirement should be enough to remove the need for the inspection specified by the proposed AD.

The FAA does not concur that the detailed visual inspection in paragraph (b) of the proposed AD should be deleted. We consider that the benefit from the one-time inspection outweighs the risk of wire damage during reassembly of the fairing. We have received reports of damaged wiring and arcing to the fuselage skin on in-service and newly manufactured airplanes, which indicate that additional airplanes may have pre-existing wire damage. In addition, we have found that intermittent arcing, which gradually eroded the adjacent aluminum structure and penetrated into the fuel tank, has occurred on other model airplanes without tripping the circuit breaker. Therefore, the possibility that such arcing damage could result in fuel leaking on top of the arcing wire justifies the one-time inspection.

We do not agree that the inspection increases the probability of inducing damage. We point out that the original fairing installations were done without any installation precautions. However, to ensure that wiring damage is not induced during replacement action, we included specific instructions cautioning operators to take special care when replacing the fairing. Those instructions, which were added to paragraph (b) of the proposed AD, make it unlikely that improper installation of the fairing will occur.

For these reasons, we consider that the one-time detailed visual inspection required by paragraph (b) of this AD is needed to ensure that no critical condition exists in the fleet. Paragraph (b) has not been deleted in the final rule.

Requests To Specify a Difference Regarding the Inspection Requirement

Two commenters state that, although the proposed AD specifies a one-time inspection (of all Model A319, A320, and A321 series airplanes), the previously referenced French airworthiness directive does not specify such an inspection. This difference should be included in the final rule so that other Civil Aviation Authorities can decide on the corrective actions they consider appropriate, and so that any confusion for the operators is avoided.

We concur with the request to specify this difference in the final rule. **Note 4** of the final rule includes a statement that notifies operators of the difference between this AD and the French airworthiness directive.

Request To Add a Reference to an Airplane Flight Manual (AFM)

One commenter requests adding a reference to the DGAC-approved AFM Temporary Revision (TR) 2.05.00/31 in paragraph (a) of the proposed AD as a means of compliance. That TR includes the same basic requirements defined in paragraph (a) of the proposed AD.

We concur with this request, and agree that the TR includes the same basic requirements defined in paragraph (a) of the proposed AD. Paragraph (a) of the final rule now states that ''This may

be accomplished by inserting a copy of this AD or Airbus Temporary Revision 2.04.00/31 into the AFM.''

Requests To Delete the Modification Requirement

Two commenters request deleting the modification requirement specified by paragraph (e) of the proposed AD. One commenter states that a final fix is being developed and should be available by the end of this year. When the final fix is available, a new AD should be issued to mandate the modification. Another commenter considers that the modification should be required within 18 months after the modification is made available. However, since the modification is not currently available, that requirement should be removed from the AD.

We partially concur with the requests regarding the modification requirement in paragraph (e) of the proposed AD. Although a final modification has not been completely defined, we consider it imperative to speed up the development and installation of a modification to prevent any chance of the wires being damaged either during removal and replacement of the fairing, or due to vibration while the airplane is in service. We have determined that allowing an additional 6 months for development and testing of the modification is appropriate to ensure that the modification is effective and to allow enough time for incorporating the modification on in-service airplanes. The compliance time for the modification is extended from 18 to 24 months in paragraph (e) of the final rule.

Request To Revise the Cost Estimate

The Air Transport Association (ATA) of America, on behalf of one of its members, states that re-installation of the fairing, per the ''Installation of Fuel Pump Fairing'' section of Airbus Airplane Maintenance Manual (AMM) Task 28–21–49–400–001, requires the use of a sealant with a cure time of up to 16 hours. The commenter adds that the sealant curing process will have a severe economic impact on the airlines, which does not appear to be addressed in the Cost Impact paragraph of the NPRM.

We infer that the commenter requests a revision of the cost estimate in the proposed AD, but we do not concur that a revision to the cost estimate is necessary. While we agree that the previously referenced AMM specifies the use of sealant to reassemble the front fairing and cover plate, upon further review we have determined that it is not necessary to remove the front fairing and cover plate to inspect the portion of the wiring where damage has been found. Therefore, we have revised paragraph (b) in the final rule to require removal of only the ''rear and intermediate'' fairing. With this change, there is no requirement to apply sealant during accomplishment of the action required by paragraph (b) of this AD. No change to the cost estimate was made in the final rule.

Request To Delete Paragraph (c)

One commenter requests that paragraph (c) of the proposed AD be deleted from the final rule. The airplane trouble-shooting manual (TSM) addresses what to do when a circuit breaker trips and includes procedures for checking the wiring, if necessary. The commenter adds that mandating the removal of the fairing to check the wiring when it is unnecessary may induce problems. In the past, the TSM procedure has been used to effectively locate any arcing of the pump wiring.

We do not concur that paragraph (c) should be deleted from this AD. While we agree that the TSM includes a procedure for checking the continuity of the wire, the check may not detect an exposed wire condition. In addition, there have been cases where the wire was not inspected and was later found to be damaged. Therefore, we consider that an inspection to determine the condition of the wire is necessary to ensure that no arcing condition exists. Paragraph (c) was not deleted in the final rule.

Request To Revise the Repair Requirements

One commenter recommends revising paragraph (b)(2) of the proposed AD to include a reference to the Airbus Standard Repair Manual (SRM), and points out that paragraph (b)(1) of the proposed AD references standard practices of the manufacturer's Aircraft Wiring Manual. The commenter notes that, if any damage beyond SRM limits is found, [the commenter's] procedures specify seeking FAA or DGAC repair approval for structures that are the subject of AD's.

We concur with the request to revise the repair requirements. Because the SRM is approved by the DGAC, it may be used as the approved data source to repair any damage that does not exceed the limits specified in the SRM. We have revised paragraph (b)(2) in the final rule to include the SRM as another approved method for repairing the airplane structure.

Explanation of Change Made to Proposal

We have clarified the inspection requirement contained in the proposed AD.

Although NOTE 2 in the proposal specified a detailed inspection, we have revised this final rule to clarify that its intent is to require a detailed visual inspection. NOTE 2 of the final rule has been changed accordingly.

Editorial Changes to the Final Rule

Airbus advises that the circuit breakers for the wing fuel tank pump are designated as 1QA, 2QA, 7QA, and 8QA. We have added these circuit breaker designators to paragraph (a) of the final rule.

Airbus also advises that the Aircraft Wiring Manual (AWM), Standard Practices, Chapter 20, includes procedures for repairing damaged wire. As a result of this information, we have added repair to the existing replacement action as another method of compliance in paragraph (b)(1) of the final rule. We have determined that this change will neither increase the economic burden on any operator nor increase the scope of the AD. This change provides operators with an option to either repair or replace the wire per the AWM.

Conclusion

After careful review of the available data, including the comments noted above, we have determined that air safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule with the changes described previously. These changes will neither increase the economic burden on any operator nor increase the scope of the AD.

Cost Impact

We estimate that 306 Model A319, A320, and A321 series airplanes of U.S. registry will be affected by this AD.

It will take approximately 1 work hour per airplane to accomplish the required AFM revision, at an average labor rate of $60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the AFM revision on U.S. operators is estimated to be $18,360, or $60 per airplane.

It will take approximately 2 work hours per airplane to accomplish the required inspection (including time to remove the fairing), at an average labor rate of $60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the wiring inspection on U.S. operators is estimated to be $36,720, or $120 per airplane.

Since the manufacturer has not yet developed a modification commensurate with the requirements of

this AD, we are unable at this time to provide specific information as to the number of work hours or cost of parts that will be required to accomplish the modification. The compliance time of 24 months should provide ample time for the development, approval, and installation of an appropriate modification.

The cost impact figures discussed above are based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this AD were not adopted. The cost impact figures discussed in AD rulemaking actions represent only the time necessary to perform the specific actions actually required by the AD. These figures typically do not include incidental costs, such as the time required to gain access and close up, planning time, or time necessitated by other administrative actions.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations adopted herein will not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, it is determined that this final rule does not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this action (1) is not a ''significant regulatory action'' under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a ''significant rule'' under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. A final evaluation has been prepared for this action and it is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES.**

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

2000–24–08 Airbus Industrie: Amendment 39–12015. Docket 2000–NM–227–AD.

Applicability: All Model A319, A320, and A321 series airplanes; certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For airplanes that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance per paragraph (f) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and, if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent electrical arcing of the fuel boost pump wire, which could result in wing structural damage, or fire and/or fuel vapor explosion, accomplish the following:

Airplane Flight Manual (AFM) Revision

(a) Within 10 days after the effective date of this AD, revise the Limitations Section of the FAA-approved AFM to include the following which may be accomplished by inserting a copy of this AD or Airbus Temporary Revision 2.04.00/31 into the AFM:

''FUEL SYSTEM
If circuit breaker 1QA, 2QA, 7QA, and 8QA for any wing tank fuel boost pump is tripped, do not reset.''

Inspection

(b) Within 90 days after the effective date of this AD: For each fuel boost pump, remove the rear and intermediate fairings located on the lower wing skin and perform a detailed visual inspection of the wiring and the adjacent structure along the length of the fairings. Inspect to detect damage to the wires including chafed, pinched, or melted wires, and any signs of arcing damage to the structure. When replacing the fairing following the inspection, take care not to pinch or otherwise damage the wiring of the fuel boost pumps; incorrect replacement of the fairing could cause damage to the wiring.

(1) If any damage to the wire, as described in paragraph (b) of this AD, is detected: Prior to further flight, either repair the wire or replace the wire with new wire per the manufacturer's Aircraft Wiring Manual, Standard Practices, Chapter 20. Submit a report at the time specified and per paragraph (d) of this AD.

(2) If any arcing damage to the structure is detected: Prior to further flight, repair the damaged structure per the airplane Structural Repair Manual or a method approved by either the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate; or the Direction Generale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France (or its delegated agent). For a repair method to be approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, as required by this paragraph, the Manager's approval letter must specifically reference this AD. Submit a report at the time specified and per paragraph (d) of this AD.

Note 2: For the purposes of this AD, a detailed visual inspection is defined as: ''An intensive visual examination of a specific structural area, system, installation, or assembly to detect damage, failure, or irregularity. Available lighting is normally supplemented with a direct source of good lighting at intensity deemed appropriate by the inspector. Inspection aids such as mirror, magnifying lenses, etc., may be used. Surface cleaning and elaborate access procedures may be required.''

(c) As of the effective date of this AD: For any fuel boost pump on which circuit breaker 1QA, 2QA, 7QA, and 8QA of the pump has tripped, prior to further use of that pump, accomplish the inspection and applicable corrective actions specified by paragraph (b) of this AD.

Reporting Requirement

(d) If any damage is detected during any inspection required by paragraphs (b) and (c) of this AD: Within 10 days after accomplishing that inspection, submit a report of the inspection findings to the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; fax (425) 227–1149. The report must include a description of the damage found, the airplane serial number, and the number of landings and flight hours on the airplane. Information collection requirements contained in this regulation have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*) and have been assigned OMB Control Number 2120–0056.

Modification

(e) Within 24 months after the effective date of this AD: Modify the fuel pump wire and fairing, per a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(f) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116.

Note 3: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the International Branch, ANM–116.

Special Flight Permits

(g) Special flight permits may be issued per sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Note 4: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 2000–419–154(B), dated October 4, 2000. Operators should note that, although this AD requires a one-time detailed visual inspection, the French airworthiness directive does not mandate such an inspection.

Effective Date

(h) This amendment becomes effective on January 8, 2001.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on November 22, 2000.

Donald L. Riggin,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 00–30394 Filed 12–1–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2000–NM–107–AD; Amendment 39–12007; AD 2000–23–34]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 737–300, –400, and –500 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to all Boeing Model 737–300, –400, and –500 series airplanes, that requires replacement of the existing autothrottle computer with a new, improved autothrottle computer. This amendment is prompted by reports of asymmetric thrust conditions during flight caused by irregular autothrottle operation in which the thrust levers slowly move apart causing the airplane to bank excessively and go into a roll. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent such conditions, which could result in loss of control of the airplane.

DATES: Effective January 8, 2001.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of January 8, 2001.

ADDRESSES: The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124–2207. This information may be examined at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, Rules Docket, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thanh Truong, Aerospace Engineer, Systems and Equipment Branch, ANM–130S, FAA, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (425) 227–2552; fax (425) 227–1181.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to include an airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to all Boeing Model 737–300, –400, and –500 series airplanes was published in the **Federal Register** on June 12, 2000 (65 FR 36803). That action proposed to require replacement of the existing autothrottle computer with a new, improved autothrottle computer.

Comments

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. Due consideration has been given to the comments received.

Support for the Proposal

Two commenters state no objection to the proposed rule and indicate that the proposed replacements are already in progress on their fleets.

Request to Increase Compliance Time

Three commenters request an increase in the compliance time above the proposed one year after the effective date of this AD. One commenter suggests a compliance time of 18 months, but states no reason for its request. A second commenter suggests a compliance time of two years, to account for the amount of time necessary for a particular repair station to accomplish the modification. A third commenter does not make a specific suggestion for a compliance time, though it states that it will need four years to complete the proposed replacement using existing spares, considering the amount of time necessary for the repair station (the same one referenced by the second commenter) to modify existing autothrottle computers.

The FAA concurs that the compliance time for the requirements of this AD may be extended. To assist in determining an appropriate compliance time, the FAA contacted the manufacturer of the autothrottle computers to determine the number of authorized repair facilities and the manpower available. The FAA also obtained data on the number of autothrottle computers manufactured, the number of units already converted, and the number of airplanes that are affected. Based on this information, the FAA finds that an extension of the compliance time to 18 months will be sufficient to allow accomplishment of this AD on all affected airplanes. The FAA also finds that such an extension of the compliance time will not adversely affect the continued safety of the airplane fleet. Therefore, paragraph (a) of this AD has been revised to state a compliance time of 18 months after the effective date of this AD.

Request to Remove ''Spares'' Requirement

One commenter requests that the FAA revise the proposed AD to remove paragraph (b), the ''Spares'' paragraph. That paragraph states, ''As of the effective date of this AD, no person shall install on any airplane, an autothrottle computer having part number 10–62017–1, –2, –3, –4, –5, –11, –21, –23, –25, or –27.'' The commenter's request was based on the length of time necessary for modification of the existing autothrottle computers by an authorized repair facility.

The FAA does not concur with the commenter's request to delete the ''Spares'' requirement. As stated previously, the FAA finds that extension of the compliance time for this AD from one year to 18 months after the effective date of this AD will allow adequate time for autothrottle computers to be modified by an authorized repair facility and for operators to comply with the requirements of this AD, without compromising safety. No change to the final rule is necessary in this regard.

Request to Reduce Compliance Time and Consider Interim Actions

One commenter states that there is an inconsistency between the urgency of the unsafe condition, as explained in the proposal, and the length of the compliance time. The commenter points to the statement in the ''Differences Between Proposed Rule and Alert Service Bulletin'' section of the proposed AD, which reads, ''The FAA